Youth Foresight Dialogue

LEAVING NO YOUTH BEHIND IN THE AGE OF DISRUPTION: PERSPECTIVES ON THE POST 2030 AGENDA

November 03, 2026 | 03:00 pm – 04:30 pm PKT | AIOU, Islamabad

Background

The trajectory of youth development in South and South-West Asia is shaped by the convergence of megatrends and disruptions that will define the future of sustainable development, such as climate change and technological transformation. Alongside them, structural shifts in labour markets and skilling demands are changing how young people learn, enter work and build livelihoods. With fewer than four years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the subregion off track on many of them, these forces will also bear on the post-2030 development agenda, which today's young people will inherit and implement.

Demographically, the subregion is home to more than half of all youth in Asia and the Pacific, with numbers still growing even as youth populations are declining elsewhere in the region. In Pakistan, two-thirds of the population is under the age of 30.[1] This youth bulge presents significant opportunities to accelerate sustainable development, given the scale of the potential youth labour force and rising youth civic aspirations to contribute to their communities and countries. Managed appropriately, the rise of artificial intelligence can open new pathways for young people in digital economies. Emerging technologies and circular economic models also offer young people a generational stake in shaping more sustainable and resilient communities, locally and beyond, well past 2030.

Yet the age of disruption carries as many risks for the youth of South and South-West Asia. The demographic dividend of the subregion has not been fully realized due to structural challenges leading to high youth unemployment and rising inequality, with young people from marginalized populations[2] facing compounding exclusions in accessing and contributing to sustainable development. In Pakistan, unemployment among graduates aged 20–24 stands at 32.8 per cent, rising to 42.3 per cent among young women in the same age group, with persistent disparities in access to quality education, digital connectivity and economic opportunity across provinces and between urban and rural areas.[3]

As artificial intelligence and automation reshape labour markets, young people without relevant skills, digital access or social protection risk being locked out of the jobs of the future, including the green jobs that climate action is expected to create. Critically, South and South-West Asia faces a rapidly intensifying multi-hazard risk landscape, spanning extreme heat, floods, droughts, glacial melt and desertification, all of which threaten to reverse development progress and derail the lives of young people. Unless these gaps are addressed, they risk being carried forward into the post-2030 era.

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[1] Pakistan's Economic Survey 2025–26

[2] They include, among others, the urban poor; those in precarious employment or not in employment, education or training; those from rural and remote communities; the digitally excluded; those from ethnic minority, caste-affected, and indigenous and tribal communities; migrants; and persons with disabilities.

[3] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, using microdata from the Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024–25, conducted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Scope and Objectives

Against the backdrop highlighted above, ESCAP in collaboration with Youth Advocacy Network, the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute is organizing a youth foresight dialogue on "**Leaving No Youth Behind in The Age of Disruption: Perspectives on The Post 2030 Agenda**". The dialogue is part of SDPI's 29th Sustainable Development Conference, "Rethinking Development in an Age of Disruption", to be held on 2–5 November 2026.

The panel will examine how technological transformation, climate change and structural shifts in skilling and employment are compounding the challenges faced by young people from marginalized populations, and how these young people can nonetheless seize emerging opportunities to empower their communities and contribute to sustainable development, including through multistakeholder partnerships. It will also draw on Pakistan's experience of implementing the 2030 Agenda to identify the priorities young people should advance in shaping the post-2030 framework, and the policy recommendations, cross-border partnerships and follow-up actions needed to put youth voices and leadership at its centre.

Key discussion questions include:

- What are the compounding impacts of (1) technological transformation, (2) climate change, and (3) structural shifts in skilling and employment on young people from marginalized populations?
- How can young people capitalize on opportunities presented by these trends – including via multistakeholder partnerships with government, civil society, academia and the private sector – to empower marginalized communities and contribute to sustainable development?
- Drawing on lessons for youth inclusion from Pakistan's implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which national and subregional priorities should young people champion in the post-2030 framework, and how can they be translated into policy recommendations, cross-border partnerships and follow-up actions that leave no youth behind?

Programme Agenda

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Time	Agenda	Resource Personnel
Session MC - Ms. Amna Urooj, Researcher, SDPI		
03:00 – 03:05	Opening remarks	**Ms. Mikiko Tanaka**, Director and Head, ESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia
03:05 – 03:10	Special remarks	**Mr. Arsalan Ahmed Raja**, Program Manager, Prime Minister's Youth Programme
03:10 - 03:15	Regional overview	**Mr. Danish Tariq**, Regional Caucus Coordinator Asia Pacific, United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth
03:15 – 04:10	Panel discussion	**Distinguished Speakers** • **Mr Asim Rehman**, Director, Environment Protection and Climate Change Department, Government of Punjab • **Mr. M. Umair Mufakir**, Founder and CEO, Native Youth Club for Climate Change • **Mr. Muhammad Shayan Azmat**, Education and Development Expert • **Ms. Asifa Jamali**, Urdu AI Dost, We Are New Generation Pakistan, Balochistan • **Dr. Sadya Salar**, Advocacy & Partnerships Manager, Khawaja Sira Society and Transgender Rights Activist • **Ms. Amna Saeed**, Youth Coordinator, Frontier Women Alliance for Inclusive Development and Disability Rights Activist **Moderator**: **Ms. Memoona Asif**, Assistant International Engagements Coordinator, Youth Advocacy Network, Pakistan
04:10 – 04:20	Remarks by Session Chair	**Mr. Ahmed Iqbal Chaudhry**, Member, Provincial Assembly of Punjab
04:20 – 04:30	**Open Discussion**	